

TOO MANY CROOKS!

BY E. J. RATH.

A Young Lady Yearns to Write A Play All About Crooks And Their Devious Ways

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CHAPTER I.

CHARLOTTE BROWNING gazed from the tannou of her father's speeding limousine, idly watching the moonlit road, the poplars and hedges that bordered it close, and the strip of shining river that lay just beyond. But the dim landscape was not in her thoughts, because she was frowning an emphatic displeasure. She drew her wrap closer about her throat with an impatient hand, and shivered perceptibly, although the September night was sending a soft and warm breeze through the open window.

Suddenly she withdrew her gaze from the roadway and stared down at her lap, where lay a crumpled and twisted theater programme. Her frown deepened. Clearly there was something offensive about the programme. Seizing it in her hands, she tore it with a swift movement and tossed the pieces out into the night.

"The very worst of them all!" exclaimed Charlotte. Sitting beside Charlotte in the tannou was the large and aggressively stout figure of a man, sleeping comfortably. His chin drooped forward until it rested on his shirtfront, while his silk hat was tilted backward until it disclosed the glistening forehead of a pink bald head. Sweet content had settled itself upon Erastus P. Browning.

"Wasn't it simply awful, dad?" There was a heave of the large figure, a sigh, and a grunt.

"Er—ah—what?" "The play, of course. The play!" said Charlotte sharply.

"Yes, yes; of course. The play, my dear. Very fine play."

And Mr. Browning, dimly conscious of having met the demands of conversation, sagged back for the remainder of his nap.

"I said," declared Charlotte in clear and cold tones, "that it was simply awful. It was a bad play."

"I—uh?" "Yes, dear. So I said; a bad play. Improper."

Charlotte turned a quick glance of annoyance in the direction of her somewhat impatient parent. It was just bad—poor—worthless."

Mr. Browning nodded heavily and, reaching out with a mechanical gesture, patted his daughter's hand.

"Yes, darling—rotten," he affirmed, and fell asleep again.

Charlotte, with an angry movement of her head, turned toward the land of her parent. Then she changed her mind and, gripping Erastus P. Browning firmly by the arm, shook him into a closer semblance of wakefulness than he had displayed since the city lights vanished behind them.

"What did you say about that play?" asked Charlotte pointedly.

Mr. Browning did not remember what he had said, and was cautious.

"A difficult play to analyze," he said tentatively.

"Evidently," retorted Charlotte scornfully. "Your own analysis is a year that you have already told me was a very fine play, also improper and rotten."

Mr. Browning coughed and sighed. "In spots, you see, Charlotte; in spots. Both—in spots."

"Which spots?" Charlotte was a relentless questioner.

"Why—different spots. Excellent first act; fine, interesting characters; good actors; nice scenery."

"And the second act?"

"Ah—the second act. Let me see. Oh, yes, the second act. Why—er—not so good."

"It was the only act in the whole play that was even passable," announced Charlotte coolly.

Mr. Browning looked pained and disappointed. But it was too late to retreat.

"Can't agree with you, my dear. Sorry; can't agree."

"I'll tell you why you can't agree," said Charlotte. "It's because you never saw the second act. You were sound asleep. Oh, yes, and once you awoke, you did. You went to sleep just before the curtain in the first act and you never woke up until they blew the safe in the third act."

"Didn't it make a noise when they

came your own people. They are people—they are real!" Charlotte had taken to pacing the floor, and her father nodded admiringly. He was very proud of Charlotte.

"Now, I've got my idea and part of my plot," she said, talking rapidly. "The pure mechanics of it, of course, I already know. That's the advantage of the special course I took after I left college. And now I'm coming to my characters. I'm just ready to get acquainted with them."

She paused and looked significantly at her parent.

"You're getting along finely, I'm

put together. But the characters—impossible! They were not crooks; they were dummies. It was like Punch and Judy. Dad, the real crook play hasn't been written yet!"

"I guess you're right, come to think of it," he assented. "Yes, I'm sure you're right."

"And the reason is this," pursued Charlotte. "The people who write these plays know nothing whatever about their characters in real life. The true crook has never been staged yet. His purpose, his motives, his ideals and aspirations are unknown to the author."

"Ideals and aspirations?" echoed

characters," said Charlotte thoughtfully. Father Browning was sitting up straight in his chair.

"Meet who? Crooks?"

"I must go to live among them," she answered quietly.

"Not on—your—life!" "Come now, dad," said Charlotte hastily. "Don't misunderstand the purpose of it. It's a necessary means to an end."

"Means he hanged! You'll stick right here."

"Be sensible, dad. You want me to succeed, don't you?"

"Succeed? Sure, I want you to suc-

ceed. You can write all the plays when lawyers made their living. It was past nine o'clock when a small boy, who whistled in an off key, emerged from an elevator, sauntered to the door of Room 144, which was that of Marshall Blackstone, and unlocked the door. Charlotte was at his heels as he entered.

"Are you the lady that's getting the divorce?"

"No!"

"The boss said she was a pippin," he observed, eyeing Charlotte.

It was at once an explanation and a delicate compliment, and Charlotte, whose perceptions were almost invariably keen, was not displeased.

"I'll wait for Mr. Blackstone," she said, seating herself in a comfortable chair in the outer room.

It was after ten o'clock when an astonishingly thin young man entered from the hall and tossed his hat on a table.

"Why, Charlotte!" he exclaimed.

"Of course," she began, "I insist on paying for advice."

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THE PLOT OPENS TO-DAY

NOBODY HAD EVER DENIED CHARLOTTE ANYTHING—AND SHE WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE HER OWN WAY NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED—SOMETHING DID!

Begin Reading This Story Now



"MEET WHO? CROOKS?" HE ASKED. "I MUST GO TO LIVE AMONG THEM," SHE ANSWERED.

Mr. Browning.

"Assuredly! Crooks have them. In reality, they are a very extraordinary people. The trouble is, we do not understand them. We do not know them."

"I don't doubt that my little girl will write the best play of them all," he said confidently.

"Not because I am a better playwright, father," she said deprecatingly. "But simply because I propose to find the truth before I try to write how little the writers knew about it."

"Absolutely the right idea," agreed Mr. Browning, slapping his knee. "So I am going away for a while, dad."

"Away! Why? And where?" "I haven't exactly decided where. But it will be where I can meet my

sure," said he. "What kind of a play will it be, dear?"

"A crook play, dad."

Mr. Browning lifted his eyebrows slightly and drew at his cigar.

"Now I understand why we've been to seven crook plays," he observed. "Exactly, dad. We've been going to crook plays just to satisfy ourselves how little the writers knew about it."

"Why, I thought that at least one of 'em was—"

"Of course, dear old innocent," interrupted Charlotte. "You thought it was a good play. But it wasn't. The plot wasn't so bad, it was well enough

"I won't keep you long. It's important. It's about my play."

"Oh, yes," nodded her father. "Is it finished?"

"Only last week I told you I hadn't written a line as yet," she reminded him.

"Certainly! I remember, my dear. But I thought you might have dashed it off since."

"Days are not dashed off," said Charlotte with dignity.

"Well, I didn't know," apologized Mr. Browning humbly.

"First, you must have the call; that comes from within."

He nodded.

"Then comes your idea—your theme."

"To be sure, my dear; of course."

"And then that idea must be followed in your mind—weeks, months, perhaps years."

"As long as that?"

"Sometimes longer. And then your plot begins to develop. And you must live that plot yourself—live it!"

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Browning, biting off the end of a cigar.

"And then come your characters, and you live with them. They be-

Fresh Air Exercises And Diet Rules For Summer Health

By Pauline Furlong

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Good Heart Action Indispensable to Health

MOST of my readers understand that the first essential for maintenance of health, endurance, capacity for daily labor and power of resistance to common disorders is a strong, well developed heart. There is only one way to bring about this condition, and that is through active outdoor exercise, which stimulates blood circulation throughout the body. Without pure, active blood no one can be really well.

We all know that in early youth the recuperative powers of the heart and lungs are at their best, and through games and exercises which demand speed and great activity of all the muscles the heart is developed to its highest degree and kept in healthful condition.

When we grow older we do not gallop about like children, and many new conditions begin to develop, which demand greater care of the heart and other organs. Experts say that up to the age of thirty the system will be benefited by active and strenuous exercise, unless a great amount of superfluous flesh has been allowed to develop and retard the heart action.

At about the age of forty mineral deposits begin to form in the arteries. These thicken and lose their elasticity unless some regular form of mild exercise is followed. Golf, in middle life, is the best of all round exercise for all, because it requires many hours in the fresh air and sunshine and stimulates the action of the heart, blood and lungs without overtaxing the system. Of course, golf is a typical walking exercise, but the many strokes with the clubs demand not only skill, but encourage lung capacity, blood circulation and active exercises for

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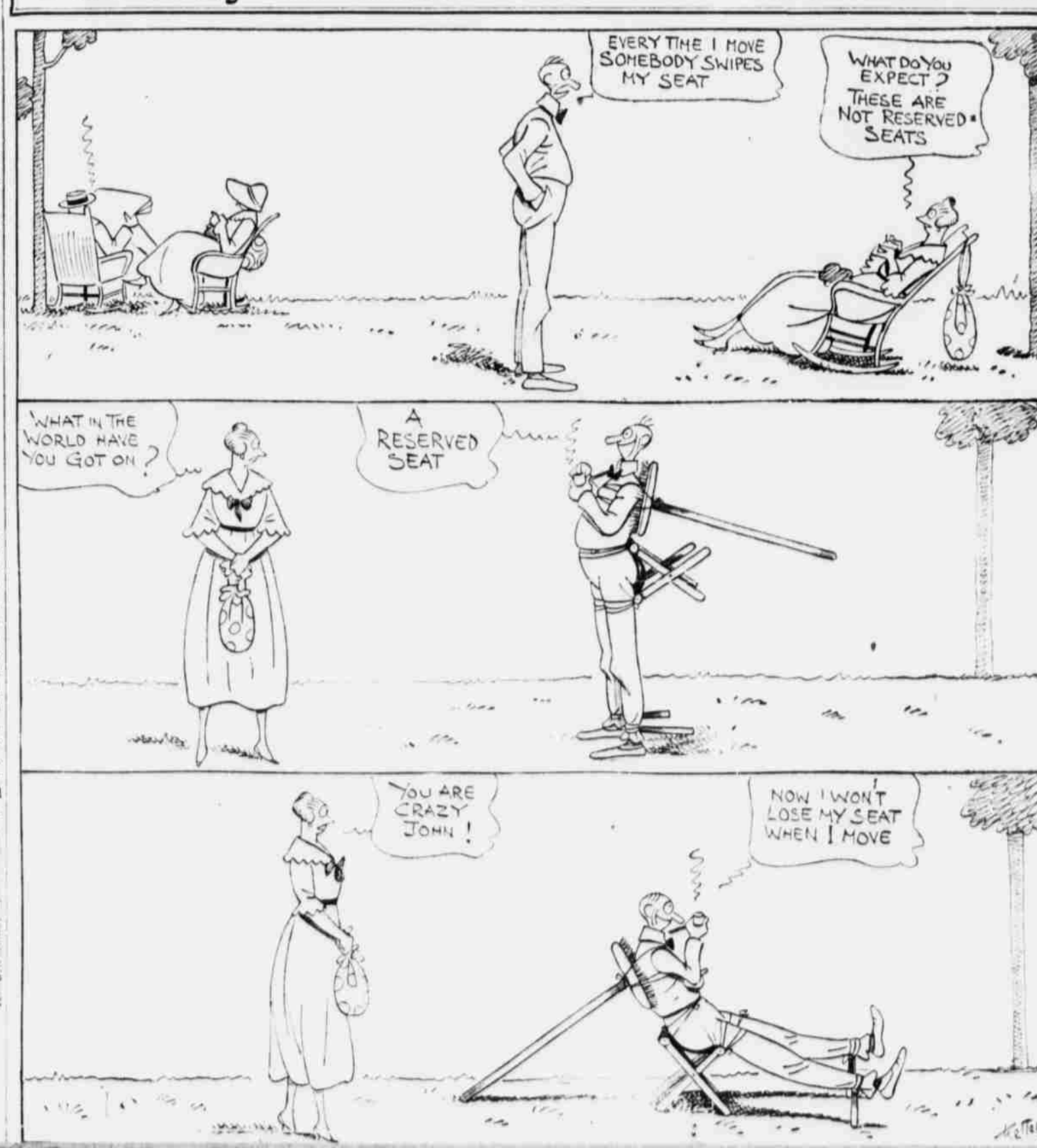
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The Day of Rest

Copyright, 1918, by The Press Publishing Co. (The New York Evening World)

By Maurice Ketten



Original Fashion Designs For The Evening World's Home Dressmakers

By Mildred Lodewick

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Dainty Frocks of New Design

WOMEN of to-day appreciate the important part that clothes play in everyday life more than ever before. Some women, however, by using a little forethought gain much more value from their clothes than others. To anticipate one's needs and arrange to have suitable clothes early in the season and in due time for special occasions is practicing efficiency, which brings not only a calm mind that can be put to sterner lines of thought, but saves any unwelcome expenditure in a hasty moment.

That is likely to happen when one suddenly awakens to the fact the moment has arrived for a frock which has not been thought of before.

Now is the time to make the dainty frocks which July and August demand. Very smart this year are plaid effects in sheer fabrics such as voile, dimity or sheer cotton crepe, any of which would charmingly develop my design to-day. Plain white organdy is introduced in a distinctive manner, achieving a pretty trimming. It is cut into scalloped bands applied to the waist and skirt by hemstitching, and the material cut away underneath them. The waist is a plain foundation, as well as the skirt, whose tunic is plain and straight.

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